



Request for Application

Parent Pathways Grant Program 2025

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education (OPHE) is pleased to issue this request for applications for eligible postsecondary institutions to fund scholarships and programming to address supports for parenting student success at postsecondary institutions. This document describes the requirements applicants will be expected to meet and the criteria that will be used to award funding.

The application submission window will open at 12:00 AM on **Monday, January 6, 2025**, and close at 2:00 PM on **Monday, February 3, 2025**.

Please complete and return your application submission via eGrants.

Background

Studies indicate that one in five undergraduate college students is balancing the responsibilities of raising children while pursuing a postsecondary education¹ and almost half of these students do not earn a degree².

Parenting students bear significant burdens and need additional support to navigate through their academic program successfully. In December 2022, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) released a policy report³ following consultations with parenting students, postsecondary institution staff, subject matter experts, various state agencies, and community leaders. The Parent Pathways Learning Network (PPLN) concentrated on addressing the necessary support for food, childcare, housing, and financial aid. The results underscored the importance of integrating the firsthand experiences of parenting students into statewide policymaking. Governor Shapiro, in support of these findings, reallocated \$1.61 million in his 2024-2025 budget to support these students.

The Parent Pathways grant provides funding to institutions to directly support the persistence of these students in the form of tuition assistance, emergency funding, and wrap-around services.

Eligibility

For the purposes of this grant, “institution” shall include postsecondary institutions in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with authorization to award an associate degree or higher academic degree, as defined in section 2001-J of the Public-School Code of 1949, as

¹Young parenting students in higher education and the colleges that serve them (childtrends.org)

² [GAO-19-522 Highlights](#), HIGHER EDUCATION: More Information Could Help Student Parents Access Additional Federal Student Aid

³ [Parent-Pathways-Policy-Report.pdf](#)

amended (24 P.S. §20-2001-J) and private licensed schools, as defined in the Act of December 15, 1986 (P.L. 1585, NO. 174). Only one proposal will be accepted from each institution. Applicants may not apply as a consortium. Only the main campus may apply, and funds can be disseminated to branches as the institution deems appropriate if awarded.

Proposals submitted by prior award winners should demonstrate how the program sustains or builds upon and enhances initiatives implemented by the institution in previous years. This would include providing qualitative and quantitative data, as available.

Priority of awarded program funds must be specific to Pennsylvania resident learners.

Parenting guidelines include biological and or legally dependent children, as defined by the United States tax code (under the age of 19 or 24 if a full-time student, or any age if permanently disabled, or a qualifying relative)⁴.

For priority consideration, institutions must be committed to serving parent learners by demonstrating that the campus has a proven network of resources and can show data and strong outcomes OR demonstrate the campus is actively working toward launching resources and programming in the upcoming year and can provide details of their upcoming work. Data and plans should be submitted in the uploads section of eGrants.

Funding and Eligible Programs

The 2025 Parent Pathways Grant offers institutions the opportunity to apply for competitive funding not to exceed \$150,000.

Students receiving awarded program funds must have completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and all gift aid is to be exhausted prior to utilizing funding. Final reporting will include a completed spreadsheet identifying the student's cost of attendance or gift aid as well as certification that funds were utilized to meet the Cost of Attendance (COA), which includes tuition, fees, housing, meals, books, and childcare. This includes all scholarship or emergency funded students.

Funds may be expended only on eligible programs, activities, and purposes identified in the proposal and approved by OPHE. Funds must be expended during the grant period and cannot be rolled over into a new grant year.

Funding requests can include a combination of any eligible programs described in this request for application. Funding is not guaranteed to any applicant.

- Parent Services Grant Funding – to expand or implement parent programming, resources, and supports.
 - Funding can be used for, but is not limited to, wrap-around services for students, expansion of childcare facilities, staffing salary support for parent navigators, transportation supports, and other expansion of work already being accomplished on campus.

- Parenting Student Scholarships

⁴ [Dependents | Internal Revenue Service](#)

- Scholarships may not exceed the COA.
- The funds should be applied as last dollar and cannot supplant any federal, state, or institutional gift aid.
- Priority should be given to senior students. Institutions must implement an equitable application process to ensure all parenting learners have the opportunity to apply.
- The institution must work with the financial aid office to identify parenting students who have completed the FAFSA and have financial need to ensure communication to eligible students. In instances where FAFSA data is incomplete, institution should secure other verifying documents including, but not limited to, relevant tax forms outlining child dependents, birth certificates of child dependents, etc.
- **Emergency Funding**
 - For the use of stipends/emergency funding up to a maximum amount as determined by the institution.
 - Emergency aid can be given to students after they have received their aid package. If the amount is for an education or basic need (budget) component, it doesn't have to be included in estimated financial aid or COA.
 - Emergency Stipends can be utilized as an on-demand emergency account for students who have received a parenting student scholarship or may be utilized for additional parenting students who have not received the scholarship.
 - Institutions must establish an emergency application process specific to parent learners and publicize the availability of this opportunity.
 - The maximum amount an institution can request for emergency funding is \$5,000.

Allowable Expenses

Due to limited funding, only items directly related to eligible programs and activities covered in this request for application will be funded by the Parent Pathways Grant.

Grants Access

Grant applications will be submitted through the eGrants system.

For access to the eGrants system and the related grant opportunities, prospective applicants should complete the [eGrants Request Form](#). Please note that the person completing the grant application must have signatory authority to negotiate grants and contracts for the institution and be able to upload documentation into the eGrants system. Institutions with eSign ability in eGrants will be able to utilize this feature to complete the application.

Grant Application Components

The Parenting Pathway grant application consists of four sections: Applicant Information, Program Information, Narratives, and Budget.

Area 1. Applicant Information

Applicant Information - In this section, institutions will provide detailed contact information for the individual responsible for the grant application. It is important to provide any changes to the institution's contact to ensure continuity of information between PDE and the institution.

Area 2. Program Information

Project Overview - In this section, the institution will provide the project overview, including the title of the project, estimated start date (no sooner than **June 1, 2025**), estimated completion date (no later than **May 31, 2026**), estimated total project cost, and grant amount requested.

Area 3. Narratives

Proposal Narrative - The proposal narrative addresses the institution's specific plans to implement the proposed programs. The institutions should ensure their response is detailed and provide specific examples of how the initiative will be further developed on campus and include the mentioned eligible programming options above. These should also be related to the policy recommendations of the Parent Pathways Learning Network, which include Data, Food and Housing Security, Child Care, and Financial Aid. Institutions are encouraged to upload letters of commitment for proposed partners and how they will be instrumental in the execution of the proposed goals/objectives. The narrative should also address how their IHE supports their parenting learners and how they are planning to implement or expand supports in the coming year.

Expected Outcome – In this section, the institution will tie each specific goal or objective stated in the goals/objectives section of this application to an expected outcome —what the institution hopes to see happen to show that the objective was met. The institution should state the expected outcomes in measurable terms, including baseline information and expected improvements, and explain how program impact will be assessed. Prior recipients are asked to address outcomes from prior Parent Pathways grant years and how the institution plans to build on those outcomes.

Area 4. Budget

Instruction; Purchased Professional and Technical Services; Contracted Services; Supplies and Equipment

The budget demonstrates a fiscally sound allocation of funds to successfully provide activities related directly to Parent Pathways initiatives. Round amounts to the nearest whole dollar. All budgets will be reviewed to evaluate appropriateness and connection to proposed grant activities and goals.

Budget Summary

The budget demonstrates fiscally-sound allocation of funds to successfully provide activities related directly to Parent Pathways initiatives. Round amounts to the nearest whole dollar. Grant funds may not be used for direct salaries, fringe benefits, or operational rates; however, funds can be used for honorariums and stipends. All budgets will be reviewed to evaluate appropriateness and connection to proposed grant activities and goals.

Budget Narrative

In this section, the institution will provide an explanation of the budget items above and how they relate to the objectives of the proposal. Ensure that the budget narrative demonstrates how funds will be used equitably for supporting the highest-risk community members.

Compliance Objectives

All grantees will be required to sign a grant agreement with PDE. All grant funds must be spent, and services performed/products received on or before May 31, 2026. PDE shall seek repayment of funds if it determines that funds were not utilized for the stated and approved purpose. Grantees will be required to submit reports in the eGrants system on forms supplied by PDE. Final Expenditure Reports must be submitted no later than June 30, 2026. Grantees are also expected to participate in PDE evaluation research, including staff interviews and student surveys.

Review Process

Applications will be reviewed on a competitive basis by a team selected by OPHE.

Applications will be reviewed for:

1. **Alignment** of goals and objectives in the proposal to the [PA Parent Pathways Learning Network](#) recommendations.
2. **Clarity** of narrative describing how funds will be spent for all or parts of the eligible programs (Technical Assistance, Parenting Student Scholarships, and/or Emergency Funding)
3. **Improvement** of student services provided on campus.
4. **Correlation** of detailed budget information with the goals and objectives of the proposal.
5. **Viability** of expected outcomes and alignment to program activities.
6. **Adaptability** of the proposal to already established resources.
7. **Accuracy** of the information submitted.

Applications that do not include all the required information as stated on the application will not be considered for funding. All qualifying applications will be reviewed and scored based on a rubric. Each application will be scored twice by unique grant evaluators.

Scoring

The following criteria will be evaluated to rank and score applications:

1. Expected Outcomes (**10 points**) – Outcomes are stated in measurable terms including baseline information and expected improvement, and there is a clear plan for assessing the impact of the program being funded through the grant.
2. Proposal Narrative (**65 points**) – The proposal narrative includes a detailed description of the proposal, fully addressing each component of the grant application and how the funds will be utilized.
3. Budget Narrative (**25 points**) – Budget information aligns with the program's goals and is accurate and itemized using per-unit cost and total expenditure.

Award and Disbursement

Award recipients will be notified in **May 2025**. All grantees will be required to sign a grant agreement with OPHE. All grant funds must be committed, and services performed by **May 31, 2026**. Funding must be spent by the end of the grant period. **No-cost extensions will not be granted.**

OPHE shall seek repayment of funds if it determines that funds were not utilized for the original stated and approved purpose. All unused grant funds must be returned to OPHE with the final report.

Program Reporting and Evaluation

Upon completion of the grant, grantees will be required to submit a final report on forms supplied by OPHE. **Final reports and correlating invoices/receipts must be submitted no later than June 30, 2026.** It is highly recommended that individuals involved in the grant administration activities coordinate to ensure awareness of the program reporting and evaluation deadlines.

Program Changes

All requests for changes to the approved grant must be submitted to the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education in writing no later than **December 31, 2025**. OPHE must approve program changes, or the grant will be rescinded. If approved, the institution must revise the budget in eGrants.

Technical Assistance

Contact OPHE at ra-edPPLN@pa.gov for technical assistance or to obtain answers to questions related to the grant application. All substantive questions must be submitted by **Monday, January 13, 2025**. Responses will be provided in the form of an FAQ distributed to all institutions on Wednesday, **January 15, 2025**.

Please ensure that staffing changes are communicated to our office, so your institution maintains access to the eGrants system.

The deadline for submission is **Monday, February 3, 2025**, at **2:00 pm**. Applications received after this time will not be considered.